

only the matapule and chiefs wore tapa *vala*, the *tua* men wore a *vala* of *losi* leaves, called *sisi losi*, but the *tua* women wore these only when poverty-stricken. The *tua* wore tapa only on dress-occasions, and then it was a worn out piece, descending to them from a previous owner of higher station. 291 565

In the presence of superiors or on occasions necessitating an outward show of respect, the *taovala*, an old mat, was worn over the regular *vala*. young members of a chiefly family, both men and women, often wore *lo-ngangatu*, ordinary tapa treated with coconut oil to make it smell sweet. [292]

Anciently it was the practice for chiefs to wear the *vala* or skirt-like garment to half-way between ankle and knee, otherwise they were said to be "cooks" or "descendants of cooks," for cooks wore the *vala* to knees or above. It was permissible, however, for a man to wear his *vala* very high to show his tattooing. [621] [304]

The combs of chiefs and commoners were distinctive. The commoner's comb (*helutuanu*) was made of coconut "needles" (rib of the frond) fastened together with fine twine. The chiefs' comb (*helutoa*) was of hardwood (some of turtle shell) which was cut entirely through with fanciful patterns. 301 565 [531]

Many of the privileges which chiefs and matapules enjoyed were prohibited to commoners. The fresh-water dug wells were enjoyed as bathing places only by chiefs. Commoners might not play certain games, notably the billiard-like game called *lafo*. If caught playing this game they would be punished, perhaps even with death. 565 [515] [524] [684]

If a chief calls at a commoner's home, the commoner accompanies him on his return to his quarters. There he talks with him. In approaching or passing a chief, or when spoken to by a chief, a commoner would assume a stooped or bowed posture called *tulolo* or *punou*. If passing a chief, he would say *tulou* (please excuse my passing). If on horseback, he would dismount. 565 574 [516] [576]

All pigeons (*lupe*) caught were taken to chiefs, and eaten only by them. If commoners ate pigeons they were punished by whipping or even death. Pigeon-snaring was perhaps the most popular of chiefly sports. A host of words refer to it. Many of them are used metaphorically of women, successful love-making being likened to successful pigeon-snaring. 262 565 223 684 [526] [196] [831]

The following are notes which were set down from the lips of a commoner (here called X) born in Vavau, and who was 58 years of age. They are of interest as giving his outlook upon social stratification. Doubtless the pride of higher connections exhibited in his remarks is typical of the attitude of many Tongan commoners. 565 829

The name which X bears is that assigned at birth and is expressive of courage. It also occurs in Tonga as the title of one of the Tui Tonga's navigators or fishermen. X's maternal grandfather fought at Pea for the Tui Kanokupolu George I, and was [553] [729]

rewarded with a tract of land on an island in the Vavau group. The tract still belongs to a member of the family, but not to X. X's family belongs to the Haa Ngata Tupu in which are Ulukalala, Tapueletu, and other great chiefs. X considers himself a matapule, because certain ancestors were *toutai* to the Tui Tonga. All people bearing X's name can trace relationship to the Tui Tonga's *toutai*, but all cannot trace relationship to the Haa Ngata Tupu chiefs, as X can. He counts himself a member of Haa Ngata Tupu by blood relationship.

As do other informants X regards all three classes as Tongan. He has relatives in Niuatoputapu, Uvea, and Samoa, brought about by his forefathers marrying there.

THE ACT OF OBEISANCE

The following is a translation of a Tongan account supplied by Mrs. Rachel Tonga. Compare 41, vol. 1, p. 434; 19, vol. 1, p. 409.

This is the way that the act of *moemoei*, or touching of the soles of the chiefs' feet as a mark of reverence, was done. That was a great mark of respect in Tonga, and it was not done to anyone but the Tamaha, the Tui Tonga, and the chiefs of one's own lineage.

To the Tamaha the respect was paid by touching the soles of her feet. This was done by all persons from the Tui Tonga himself down to the lowest person. The Tamaha was the first, highest, and most sacred chief in the land. The Tui Tonga was the most sacred male chief in the land. This respect of touching the soles of his feet was paid him by the Kauhahalo, that is the reigning king (Tui Haa Takalaua or Tui Kanokupolu) and all the high chiefs down to the lowest person.

The *moemoei* was done when first entering the house, so that one might be at liberty to sit down in the house, on the occasion of a kava party or other gathering. And when wishing to go outside of the house it was done again, after the completion of the kava ceremonies or entertainment, or other matter that might have taken one into her (or his) presence.

This is the way that the *moemoei* is done. One goes and stoops down and places the back of both hands on the soles of the chief's feet. And after that is finished then one stands up and goes. And should it be difficult to approach and *moemoei* because of her (or his) partaking of the kava being too ceremonious, one went to a small wooden bowl which was left at the threshold outside and which was called "the carrier of immunity" (*koe fapanonga*). One went and did the *moemoei* ceremony to the bowl, just as if it were the Tamaha or the Tui Tonga. Then one was at liberty to go home, free of tapu.

If one was doing *moemoei* to one's own hereditary chief, it was done with the crown of the head. One went and knelt down and placed the crown of his head against the soles of the chief's feet, so that one might be at liberty to sit down or to go as the case might be.

Thomson (54, p. 293, footnote 1) has an interesting note on performing *moemoei*, in which he points out that it was performed at times as a prophylactic:

A salute paid to the highest chief present. The person performing it sits cross-legged before him, and bows the head until the forehead touches the sole of the chief's foot, and then brushes the foot first with the palm and then with the back of each hand. After touching a chief's person the *moemoei* must be performed on pain of the liver swelling up and causing death. As they are subject to scrofulous diseases, which they attribute to an unwitting breach of the *tapu*, they used to perform the *moemoei* frequently from motives of caution, without reference to any special *tapu* they had broken.

ORAL TRADITIONS

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of Velata the feats of a warrior named Tu'uhetoka of Ha'afeva, another island of Ha'apai, who was considered by others to be one of the most outstanding heroes. Naturally they sang the praises of their own two warriors, and said that after one skirmish Tāufa'āhau (King George) came and found Tu'uhetoka standing among a group of dead enemy warriors whom he claimed he himself had killed, but who, according to the 'Uiha people, were killed by another outstanding warrior named Puakatau whom Tu'uhetoka had himself killed out of jealousy.

In 1965 I visited the island of Lifuka where this war took place, and was taken by the local people to what remains of the fortress of Velata itself, as well as to the historic tracts of land surrounding it. My local informants told me the names of these tracts of land (*api*) and also how these names had arisen. One story was about Tu'uhetoka. They said that at the peak of a skirmish in which Tāufa'āhau and some of his men were being overpowered a warrior of outstanding calibre among the men of Ha'afeva intervened, and with a rare display of skill and courage, he and Tāufa'āhau ploughed their way through Tu'i Tonga's warriors, felling scores of them with their clubs while the rest fled. Watching this warrior's heroic performance, Tāufa'āhau was said to have remarked that he was like a gigantic fish chasing a shoal of small fish. After the final victory Tāufa'āhau bestowed upon him the name Tu'uhetoka (meaning 'standing in the face of defeat'), and gave him a sizeable portion of land at Lifuka, just alongside his own, and called it Ikalahi (big fish) in memory of his gallantry. Later he was given the island of Ha'afeva as his estate (*tofi'a*),⁸ and the name Tu'uhetoka became a noble title.

I found oral traditions a useful supplement to written sources. Care needed to be taken, however, that the oral traditions were in fact genuine and not distorted versions of written accounts. I was able to detect a few cases where people claimed to have oral knowledge which turned out to be spurious. When I was at 'Uiha I asked the old men about a certain tradition which existed there. After a while they became uncertain and said that Mr So-and-so, who was not present, knew all about it. Consequently we sent for him. He was a school teacher in his early 50s, who was able to read English books haltingly. What he had to tell turned out to be based on what he had read in a collection of tales written for schools. However the genuine oral traditions proved to be a valuable check on the reliability of written sources. An example of this may be seen in the account of the destruction of the fortress, god houses and effigies of 'Uiha. Bishop Blanc has the following account in his history of Tonga:

⁸ S. Latukefu, 'Church and State in Tonga', Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University (Canberra, 1967), 192.